

Here are some helpful references when fielding inquiries about school buses and light rail tracks:

ARS 28-601. Definitions

16. “**Railroad**” means a carrier of persons or property on cars operated on stationary rails.
18. “**Railroad train**” means a steam engine or any electric or other motor that is with or without cars coupled to the steam engine or electric or other motor and that is operated on rails.

ARS 28-853. Railroad grade crossing; stop required of certain vehicles

A. Except as otherwise provided in this article, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a railroad, the driver of a motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire, of any school bus carrying any school child or of any vehicle carrying or returning after delivery of explosive substances or flammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo shall stop the vehicle within fifty feet but not less than fifteen feet from the nearest rail of the railroad, while stopped listen and look in both directions along the track for an approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train and not proceed until the driver can do so safely. After stopping as required by this section and on proceeding when it is safe to do so, the driver of the vehicle shall cross only in a gear of the vehicle for which there is no need to change gears while traversing the crossing and shall not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

B. This section does not apply at:

1. A crossing where a police officer or a traffic control signal directs traffic to proceed.
2. A street railway grade crossing within a business or residence district.

AAC R17-9-104. Minimum Standards for School Bus Operation

B. Loading or unloading of passengers:

15. In addition to the requirements for railroad grade crossings contained in A.R.S. § 28-853, a school bus driver shall comply with the following:

- a. Use hazard warning lights as described in A.R.S. § 28-947(D) within a minimum of 100 feet of a railroad grade crossing to warn motorists of an intended stop.
- b. Shut off any radio, compact-disc player, and other source of sound within 50 feet of a railroad grade crossing.
- c. Stop the school bus, with or without passengers aboard, at a railroad grade crossing when traffic at the railroad grade crossing is not directed by a police officer.
- d. While stopped at a railroad grade crossing at which traffic is not directed by a police officer, activate the noise suppression switch, completely open the service door and the window to the left of the driver and, by hearing and sight, determine that it is safe to cross. Before proceeding, close the service door. De-activate the noise suppression switch after crossing the tracks.

e. Do not stop to load or unload passengers within 200 feet of a railroad grade crossing. This provision does not prohibit stops at a railroad station or on a highway that parallels the railroad tracks.

Per the Minimum Standards, school buses are required to stop at railroad crossings, regardless of the exemption in 28-853.B.1. This is also the case for Light Rail crossings, which fit the definition of a railroad in 28-601.